

A Semi-Centenary Discourse,

DELIVERED

BEFORE THE WILMINGTON CONFERENCE,

AT CHESTERTOWN, MD., MARCH 14, 1878.

BY REV. H. COLCLAZER.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

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PRINTED BY FERRIS BROS., No. 10 E. THIRD STREET.
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At the house

1592

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SERMON.

"Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart, for consider how great things he hath done for you."—
1 Sam., xii., 24.

At the last session of the Conference, held in Milford, March 7th, 1877, I was unexpectedly requested to preach a Semi-Centenary sermon at this time.

It was not the design of the Conference to celebrate any particular event in the history of Methodism, but simply to record the fact that one of its members, by the blessing of God, has been an effective itinerant minister for the past fifty years.

In the presentation of such facts and events as relate to the period of time which we contemplate, so wide is the field of observation, and so numerous the materials which enter into its history, that only a bare fragmentary statement can be given during the short hour of this discourse.

Instead of tracing the successive stages of the growth and development of Methodism since 1828, and elaborating the causes which have resulted in such a wonderful progress as we have witnessed, nothing more can be done than to give a brief statistical comparison between the then and the now of the status of the church.

But even such a meagre statement as we are able to present, is suggestive, to the student of ecclesiastical history, of the overruling providence of God in this great work of evangelization, which, from its commencement, has continued to our time with unabated force and increasing magnitude.

In meeting what I deem to be the reasonable expectation of my brethren, I must indulge in some personal reminiscences,

which I hope will not expose me to the charge of egotism. If, however, any one is disposed to be critical, the worst that I can wish may befall him is, that he may live long enough to preach in some future year a semi-centenary discourse.

It seems like a dream born of the imagination, as I look back at the beginning of my preaching days in the Ohio valley and the peninsula of Michigan. There was something so novel, so deeply enchanting, in the ever-varying scenes through which I passed, that, to this day, I call them up as so many pictures around which memory and imagination have woven their wreaths of unfading beauty. Just as we behold our childhood days, through the mellow light of age, they seem brighter and fairer than all others. Time and distance soften all things, like the distant mountain landscape, beheld through the hazy atmosphere of a summer day which hides from view the rugged rocks and deep ravines, presenting only a rounded scene of beauty.

Death has also laid away some blessed memories, with the dust of many fathers and brethren, during these past fifty years, at whose feet I sat in the Conference room, in the Bishop's council, and in the congregation of the righteous. "They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, they were swifter than eagles, and stronger than lions. How are the mighty fallen!"

By reason of my connection with the Ohio Conference, it was my good fortune to become acquainted with a class of preachers of extraordinary talent and brilliancy of eloquence. From 1825 to 1844, this Conference was peculiarly distinguished for its great men. Some of those men were *then* venerable for their years, and renowned for their labors, in connection with Asbury and McKendree, in the dawn of Methodism in the West. John Collins, James Quinn, David and Jacob Young, were fathers of the Conference, but still effective and laborious. Their names are historic. With unpretending manners, they were wise counselors and most genial companions. Indeed, I often wondered how they had retained so much gentleness of disposition and suavity of manners, notwithstanding the rough usage they had received in former days. But they were real heroes. We often find true courage combined with the tenderest emotions of human nature.

There were others whose history does not extend as far back as these, but who were equally distinguished in their day, and whose names will go down to posterity as among the greatest preachers ever produced in America. My limited time will only permit the mention of a few, some of whose names are familiar to the most of my hearers.

Charles Elliott stands high in the annals of Methodism. He came to Ohio in 1811, where he resided for a time in a small but neat log cabin, on the head waters of the Muskingum river, in which I had the honor of preaching my first sermon. After a few years he emerged from his seclusion and became one of the most distinguished men of the west. His Hibernian eloquence and industrious pen added greatly to the progress of Methodism in the valley of the Ohio. He was, perhaps, the best journalist which the church ever produced in this country. He gained a European as well as an American celebrity.

During the session of the first Conference which I ever attended—in 1829—I met for the first time Thomas A. Morris (afterwards Bishop). He was then in the prime of manhood. Bishop McKendree presided during the session, but was unable to preach. Morris preached the ordination sermon, the delivery of which produced the most astonishing effect. Shouts and tears were heard and seen throughout the entire audience. Usually calm himself, he became deeply moved; all his reserved power, for which he was remarkable, was strikingly manifest in the peroration.

The celebrated H. B. Bascom joined the Ohio Conference a little later, I think, than Elliott. After his sojourn in Washington as Chaplain to Congress, he returned to the West. In 1827 he was appointed President of Madison College, in Pennsylvania. During this and previous times, he often passed over our western sky as a brilliant meteor. His oratory attracted all classes of society. His delivery was exceedingly rapid, and his style marvelously ornate. The sublime magnetism of the man seemed to absorb all the self-consciousness of his hearers. His eloquence was, perhaps, more astounding than edifying, simply because it was difficult to analyze a subject so profusely ornamented, as was usually the case with his sermons. His published dis-

courses give no adequate idea of what they were, when delivered from the pulpit.

Even so long ago as fifty years, John P. Durbin was a marked man among the members of the Ohio Conference. He was just then emerging from the forests of Ohio, where he had studied his grammar by the light of pine knots, to take rank among the great preachers, and the accomplished educators of the country.

L. L. Hamlin and Edward Thompson, (both afterwards Bishops) joined the Conference a short time subsequent to 1828. One shut up his law books, and the other laid aside his scalpel, to become itinerant preachers of the M. E. Church. They were men of culture and great eloquence.

I knew Bishop Hamlin previous to his conversion, in Zanesville, Ohio, where he resided. I knew him to listen to a boy preacher, twice on a Sunday, with the same gravity and humility which characterized his whole life afterwards as a Christian.

Edward Thompson from boyhood was a life-long friend, always genial, but always wise. A Presbyterian minister once said to me, "I like to hear Thompson: he always has *something* to say."

There were a host of others, in the same Conference, better known to Western than to Eastern fame. Edmund W. Sehon, afterwards Missionary Secretary of the Church South, was every inch a man, physically as well as mentally. His social position, as the son-in-law of the distinguished Judge McLean, gave him access to the best society, which he was eminently qualified to adorn.

J. B. Finley, the stalwart pioneer, was for some time missionary to the Wyandotte Indians. Somewhat abrupt in manner, but a man of tender sensibilities, though he did not equal some of his compeers as a preacher, he was always among the leaders in Conference action.

William H. Raper occupied an eminent position among his brethren. He had no superior in the Conference as a logician. At times his logic would become heated with the internal fires of an intense imagination.

W. B. Cristy was one of the finest specimens of Western oratory. He died comparatively early. His body was too feeble to bear the strain to which it was subjected by the activity of his powerful intellect.

Russell Bigelow deserves a first place in the ranks of these remarkable men. He was my first presiding elder, and consequently I had many opportunities of hearing him preach. He was the greatest pulpit orator I ever heard. His eloquence was spontaneous and overwhelming. A judicious writer says of him, "Russell Bigelow was a man of inferior presence, but of astonishing eloquence, of which the elder Methodists of Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio never tire of speaking, though they can only describe it as indescribable."

Among the sainted ones, who have all gone to their reward, I must not forget to mention the name of my first colleague, Adam Poe. He was a descendant of the Poes who in early days fought the Indians with so much bravery, as described in Jefferson's history of Ohio. They are represented as men of giant stature and of undaunted courage. Adam Poe inherited these qualities of his ancestors. His practical turn of mind made him a successful book agent at Cincinnati, which relation he sustained for many years with credit to himself, and usefulness to the cause of Christian literature throughout the great west.

These men were cotemporary, and formed a group in one Conference. Two became distinguished Missionary Secretaries, four became Bishops, one a General Book Agent. Among them were authors, editors, and educators, and all of them distinguished preachers. A parallel to such a group cannot be found in any Conference before or since.

It was during a debate on the floor of the Conference, held in Cincinnati in 1833, between two of these giants of intellect, Bigelow and Cristy, on the question of distributing a part of the capital of the book concern to the Canada Conference, that I first saw our present venerable Bishop Ames. He was not a member of the Ohio Conference, but was near by, in Indiana. His name is worthy to be associated with those whose brilliant talents shed so much lustre upon the annals of Methodism in the west at that time.

It is a mistaken idea that the Methodist preacher of the west in those early days, was a man of rude nature and uncultivated manners, as ready to use his muscle as his brains in defence of the gospel. The autobiography of the venerable Cartwright has

done much to create such opinions. He does injustice to himself in some pictures which he gives. He was unique. He made the circumstances of his rare and adventurous life—an uncut diamond, rough externally, but with shining qualities within. There were few like him. He lives in the affectionate memory of the people of Illinois and Indiana, and, indeed, of the whole church.

We are not surprised that Methodism in the West made rapid advances under the ministration of such men, and others worthy to rank with them, but of whom I have not time here to make mention.

The Ohio, at the time of my admission, was the leading Conference west of the Alleghanies. It extended from the Muskingum river on the east, to the western boundary of the State. Its southern boundary included nearly all of what is now West Virginia, and extended north to the Great Lakes. In 1828, it reported a membership of 30,895, and 85 travelling preachers. In looking over the report of Conferences for 1877, I find seven and a part of an eighth Conferences within the same limits, viz.: Ohio, Central Ohio, Cincinnati, North Ohio, West Virginia, Michigan, Detroit, and East Ohio. In place of 85 there are now about 1260 preachers, with a church membership aggregating 220,784. These results have been obtained during the past fifty years in a comparatively small part of the Ohio valley.

In order to realize the prodigious growth of Methodism in the West during the same period, it will be necessary to extend our observation and bring into view the great Mississippi valley, and also the vast region beyond.

In 1828, there were eight Conferences, extending from the Alleghanies to the eastern border of the Mississippi river—Pittsburgh, Ohio, Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, Holsten, Tennessee, and Mississippi, numbering a membership of 150,904, reporting 519 traveling preachers. Within the same territory, there are now twenty-six Conferences, reporting 626,002 members, with 4130 preachers. No returns of churches or of Sunday-schools were given in 1828, but in 1877, the Conferences reported a church property valued at \$21,794,042. The Sunday school department reports an aggregate of 595,093

scholars, 8199 schools, presided over by 48,585 officers and teachers.

The vast territory beyond the Mississippi, in 1828, was a *terra incognita*. The great pathfinder had not then trodden the snows of the Sierras.

The gold fields of California and the inexhaustible mines of Nevada and Colorado had not been uncovered to the eyes of civilization. Mormonism had not polluted the Utah valleys with its abominations, nor had the traditions of the northwest inspired the bard to write the beautiful story of Hiawatha. I stood on the borders of civilization in the northwest when this interesting portion of American territory opened its gates to the adventurous emigrants from all climes.

How rapidly they improved the opportunity is attested by the facilities of communication which have been established between the Atlantic and the Pacific coasts, the immense mineral wealth developed, the number of States organized, and the large increase of population within the last three or four decades.

The heterogeneous character of the population of the country west of the Mississippi presented peculiar difficulties in the way of Christian influence and success, but, notwithstanding, the progress of Methodism has justified its reputation for successful enterprise in all new fields of operation. In 1828, the Missouri and Mississippi Conferences had but a few feeble appointments along the western banks of the great river, but along the whole line of the eastern border was a vanguard of itinerants from Natchez to Michigan waiting for the time to cross. Marvellous indeed has been the success of the church since that time in all parts of that vast country. Other churches are operating in that inviting field with cheering success, but Methodism is not behind the chiefest among them. From Texas to Lake Superior, from thence across to Puget Sound, down the Pacific coast to St. Angelos, and thence to Texas, all along and within these lines the growth of the church has been wonderful. Where fifty years ago there was not an entire Conference, there are now 23 Trans-Mississippi Conferences, reporting, in 1877, 211,169 members, 1932 preachers, and 178,602 Sunday-school scholars, with a church property valued at \$4,977,266.

Aggregating the figures which we have given of the Methodist *Episcopal* Church in the west, we find west of the Alleghanies, extending to the Pacific, a membership of 837,171, which comprises more than one-half of its members in the United States. There is spread over this section of the nation, 6062 traveling preachers. The reports show 773,695 Sunday-school scholars, with a corresponding number of officers and teachers. The church property is valued at \$26,771,308.

Many reasons might be given for this astonishing success. Among these must be assigned the peculiar adaptation of the itinerant system. The Methodist preachers and the emigrants to the West have sustained a Providential relation to each other. The itinerant preachers rode alongside of their canvas-covered wagons, preached in their rude cabins, partook of their homely fare, gathered them into societies, baptized their children, and buried their dead. God moved the fathers by a mighty impulse to enter this field. Nothing could repress their zeal. No hardships appalled them, and no perils turned them back. They not only laid the foundations of the church in the wilderness, but of States as well. The civilizing influence of the gospel restrained the tendency to barbarism among the early settlers. Before the territorial governments were formed, the organizing genius of Methodism taught the people the value of social order, of good government, of peace and unity.

Some fifty years hence some gifted son of the church may, perhaps, write the philosophy of Methodistic history, when its influence upon civilization will be better appreciated than it can be at the present time.

As I have said, we are not celebrating any *special* event in the history of Methodism, but there are some things which occurred in 1828, which afford a basis of comparison between the then and the now, of a general character, to which I wish to call a brief attention. I find, for instance, in the old Methodist Magazines, (see vol. II., p. 349,) the first annual report of the Sunday-school Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The Union was organized in 1827; the report was made in 1828. It is an interesting paper in many respects, but I refer to it now only for the purpose of showing the progress which has

been made since that time in this interesting department of church enterprise. The report *estimates* the number of schools at 1024; 10,892 teachers and superintendents, and 63,240 scholars. The reports for the year 1877 give us 19,808 schools, 216,902 officers and teachers, and 1,493,118 scholars. The most of this wonderful increase has been obtained since 1840, when the Union was reorganized, and placed upon its present permanent foundation.

In the cause of general education the Methodist church has also manifested a surprising zeal during the period of time we are contemplating. In 1828, a report on education was presented to the General Conference of that year. From it we learn that the only two colleges under the patronage of the church, at that time, were in the West, one at Augusta, Kentucky, the other at Madison, Pennsylvania. It makes mention of a Seminary at Cazenovia, New York, and an Academy at Wilbraham, Massachusetts, as among the most promising of the few which at that time existed. An awakening interest in the cause of education is manifested throughout the report,—an interest which has grown into such large proportions and become so intensified as we see it in our day. I am not in possession of a catalogue of the past year showing the number of Seminaries, Academies, Colleges, and Universities now under the patronage of the church in the different Conferences. They are, however, it is safe to say, in *numbers* greater than in any other denomination in the land.

The fact of the existence of several Theological Institutes in the United States, under the patronage of the Methodist Episcopal Church, for the training of candidates for the ministry, may well excite the astonishment of some of us whose theology in the early days of Methodism had to be carried in our saddle-bags, and, alas, sometimes remained there. The miracle of this great movement consists in the fact that some of these theological schools are in the South, for the benefit of a race to whom but a few years since it was a crime to impart a knowledge of the alphabet. In fact, in whatever direction we look there appear the same encouraging signs of progress. The old magazines, to which I have already referred, (see vol. II., page 272), contain the quadrennial report made to the General Conference in 1828. In

it is made the first suggestion ever officially presented to that body on the subject of *Foreign Missions*. It recommends that missionaries should be sent to Liberia, in Africa, and to South America, as promising fields of labor. It congratulates the Conference that during the past quadrennial there had been raised a little over \$22,000, about \$5,500 annually, which was expended on a few Indian tribes on the frontiers. It was but a handful of corn upon the tops of the mountains, which now yields a wonderful harvest. \$700,000 was raised for missions during the past year, expended on missions in Africa, South America, Mexico, in Germany and Switzerland, in Scandinavia, Bulgaria, Italy, India, and China, many of these missions embracing whole Conferences which are now annually visited by some one of our bishops. One of these men, Bishop Charles Kingsley, fell a martyr in this work. His monument in Syria beckons the children of the desert to the cross of Christ. And now another sails through the Golden Gate, sending back greeting for his safe arrival in the Celestial empire. We must change a couplet of one of our old hymns, and sing,

" Where *Eastern* empires own their Lord
And *Pagan* tribes attend his word."

Having thus spoken of some of the men and things connected with the period which we contemplate, before leaving the West, in which several of my fifty years of itinerancy were spent, permit me to retrace my steps to gather up a few fragments of personal reminiscence.

In 1830 Bishop Roberts transferred me, with Elijah H. Pitcher, one year my junior, from the Ohio Valley to the Peninsula of Michigan. The interior of Michigan at that time was an unexplored country. The French had long had settlements along the shores of Detroit River and the lakes, but had never gone out of sight of those beautiful waters. There were less than 1,000 members of the M. E. Church in the entire territory, and those mostly were on the borders of Detroit River and St. Clair Lake. Ten preachers were sent to occupy that vast northwest region, six of us only were in the interior. Rarely did I see a preacher except my colleague. Naturally we felt the isolation of our situation, far from the fathers and the great men of the

Conference. We roamed *ad libitum* through the forests, hunting up the scattered emigrants, preaching mostly every day and three times on Sunday. We endured the usual hardships of pioneer life, sleeping beneath the starlit roofs of log cabins, wading deep marshes, crossing unbridged rivers, following blazed trees to find our way, or guided by Indian trails, worn for ages by savage feet, often breasting on horseback northwest snow storms, with the thermometer below zero. It is not surprising that we looked forward with intense pleasure to the Conference sessions. Turning our horses' heads towards the south, we waded through the deep marshes of the Maumee and Sandusky country until we reached the higher lands of Ohio, where we were always sure to meet fellow itinerants traveling in the same direction. These reunions were seasons of profit and pleasure. At times the company would be sufficiently numerous to form a kind of district meeting on *horseback*. Sermons were preached, lectures delivered, subjects discussed, and hymns sung. We always prayed in silence. When evening came on, some brother acquainted with the locality would be appointed commissary-general to provide quarters for the night. We were always well provided for.

During one of those pleasant scenes the subject of debate was the Sonship of Christ, whether human or divine. There was a wide difference of opinion. Bigelow was present and gave a strong argument on the divine side. Being the youngest, I was called upon last. I endeavored to excuse myself; I plead my youth and my ignorance of such a profound question, but the company insisted. It was a rule, every one must speak, so I obeyed orders. I endeavored, in a timid manner, to sustain the position that the mediatorial relation of Christ, in which both his divine and human nature were combined, constituted his filial relation, by which he became our elder brother and the son of God. When I had concluded, a brother six feet in his stirrups contemptuously and loudly asked "which side I was on?" I felt quite crest fallen at this, until the large-hearted Bigelow rode up to my side, and, placing his hand upon my shoulder, with his keen eye looking towards my stalwart brother, said, loud enough to be heard by all, "Well, Henry, you see you and I are not far

apart." I felt proud to think that I had gravitated towards such a mind as his.

Meeting our old companions at Conference, after a wide separation, was an event of great importance in those days. Too soon the session closed, the appointments being read in the usual form. We always sang at parting,

" When we asunder part
It gives us inward pain,
But we shall still be joined in heart
And hope to meet again."

For sixteen consecutive years I filled appointments in Michigan, three on circuits, five in stations, seven on districts, and one as agent of the American Bible Society. In its virgin state Michigan was a beautiful country. I never tired in traversing its burr oak opening, its small prairies, its extended plains, and its noble forests, studded with many diamond lakes. Before the early settlers had marred its features with their rude huts and their everlasting worm fences the natural scenery was charming. In my long rides, with my horse as a companion, I never felt lonely in its wildernesses. I could not appreciate the poet's sentiment,

" O, solitude, where are the charms
Which sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms
Than reign in this horrible place."

There were always more or less of living things around to attract attention and lead to meditation. The chit-chit of the squirrel, the rustle of the retreating rabbit in the forest leaves, the whirl of the quail, the burrowing sound of the woodpecker, and the frightened herd of deer, with their white signals lifted, leaping with infinite grace and beauty over the plains, compensated for the absence of human society.

Soon after 1830 Michigan began to attract the attention of an intelligent and industrious population, mostly from New York and the New England States. I doubt whether any other State in the Union ever received in the same length of time so large a percentage of educated people as came to Michigan during the decade from 1830 to 1840. I have sat by the hour in the parlor of a graduate of Harvard listening to discussions which would

have done honor to any chair of philosophy in any of our colleges. I have been shaved by a barber who would talk about science and scientific men until I would imagine the lather on my face to be protoplasm and monads. The increase was so rapid that as early as 1837 the people assembled in convention, without waiting for an enabling act of Congress, adopted a republican constitution, and petitioned for admission into the Union of States, which was immediately granted.

Here, however, as in many other cases, the church was in advance of the State. In 1836 the Michigan Conference was organized with a corps of young and enterprising preachers and with a large and increasing membership. In 1856 the Detroit Conference was organized, thus making two Conferences in the peninsula of Michigan. Where in 1831 only 10 preachers and 1,000 members were reported, we now find 474 traveling preachers and 58,436 members, with a corresponding increase in all other departments of church enterprise. Where there was not a church edifice outside of Detroit City, except an old dilapidated log house, there is now a church property valued at \$2,448,175.

After serving the church for 18 years in the West, on account of family affliction in 1846 I obtained a location, not presuming but that I should remain in that relation for a time, both nominally and practically ; but it was ordained otherwise. It resulted in my coming East to enter upon a new scene of itinerant labor. To show you how this happened, I cannot do it more briefly than by reading an autograph letter from my old friend, Bishop Hedding :

POUGHKEEPSIE, N. Y., *October 19th, 1846.*

REV. HENRY COLCLAZER :

DEAR BROTHER :—Bishop Janes informs me that you have taken a location. There is an appointment in this country we should like to get you to supply till next April, if your condition will allow of it, and you are willing so to do. It is New Brunswick, in the New Jersey Conference, a good station, about 40 miles from New York, on the railroad to Philadelphia.

The reason of its being vacant is that Rev. Wm. Roberts, who is stationed there, is going to Oregon as Superintendent of that mission. He will probably sail about the middle of November, and it is very desirable you should be there by that time, or at farthest by the first of December. You are assigned to stay till that Conference meets—late in April. As I under-

stand your wife is deceased, and that your children are with your friends, I hope you could come without great difficulty.

Please write me soon as you receive this, directed to this place, informing me whether you will come. Affectionately yours,

ELIJAH HEDDING.

I obeyed orders, and came over to New Brunswick, where I remained serving the old Liberty Street Church until the spring of 1848. At the close of this service Bishop Janes personally made application for my admittance into the New Jersey Conference, which, however, was not granted. Supposing that my work in the East was finished, I made arrangements to return to my old home. But Providence again interfered. The day before my intended departure I received a telegram from my friend, Dr. I. T. Cooper, which resulted in my appointment to fill the unexpired term of the Dr. in the Wharton Street Church, in Philadelphia, he being removed to take Dr. (now Bishop) Scott's place on his district, the Bishop having been assigned to the Book Agency by the General Conference. At the end of this service in 1849 I was readmitted into the traveling connection by the Philadelphia Conference.

1773 Thus I found myself on Methodistic classic ground in the city, where the first Conference of Methodist preachers was held in this country in 1773. In earlier days, after having stood on the borders of civilization, "not boasting of other men's labors," sometimes preaching to Indians as well as to the early emigrants, I now found myself treading in the footsteps of many illustrious predecessors. From the northern limits of the Philadelphia Conference to Northampton, on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, from bay to ocean, everywhere I have found precious memories still lingering of the great and good men who in former days preached in all these lands the word of God. On this peninsula we can scarcely find a spot where they have not been. Coke and Asbury had their first meeting at Barrell's Chapel, in Kent County, Delaware. Bishop Whatcoat's dust sleeps in the Dover graveyard. Ezekiel Cooper, Laurence Laurenson, Solomon Sharp, David Daily, Henry White, Henry Boehm, George G. Cookman, Francis Hodson, J. T. Thompson, James Massey, Laurence McComb, and a host of others, have gone before us,

making straight paths for our feet, opening a highway in the desert, and did many wonderful works. They are all now at rest. They "fought a good fight, finished their course, and kept the faith," and have received the crown of righteousness.

In 1828 the Philadelphia Conference embraced a part of Pennsylvania, called the Philadelphia District, New Jersey, and the whole of what is now the Wilmington Conference. It comprised five districts. Bishop Scott having made such a full statement, historical and otherwise, two years ago, in his semi-centenary sermon of the Philadelphia Conference, I will only supplement his statement by saying that two of the above-mentioned districts included the whole of what is now Wilmington Conference. They contained a membership of 14,174 whites and 7,226 colored. There were 18 appointments, served by 39 preachers. As a basis of comparison it is only fair to take the white membership, since the Delaware Conference has absorbed all the colored material. In place, therefore, of the 14,174 members and 39 preachers, there are now 28,297 members, and 132 traveling and 1420 ^{local} ~~and~~ preachers. Besides there are 319 Sunday-schools, 4,283 officers and teachers, and 24,673 scholars, and a church property estimated at \$1,200,115 reported for 1877.

The success of the Methodist Episcopal Church, its rapid growth and continued prosperity, have not been obtained without the occurrence of some events during the past fifty years which threatened to be serious disasters. In 1828, after a long and bitter controversy on both sides, and the failure of the General Conference of that year to restore harmony, the disaffected party withdrew and organized the Protestant Methodist Church. This painful separation alienated many brethren who had been united in the closest bonds of Christian love. But these wounds have long been healed. Dr. Bond and Nicholas Sneathen have forgotten their earthly strife in the blessedness of heaven. The battle cry raised by these old warriors has died away, and there now exists a growing tendency all round "to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."

The separation which occurred in 1844 was of a far more serious nature. That event shook not only the church but the whole nation with its throes of agony. The organization of the

Methodist Episcopal Church *South* carried with it nearly one-half of the membership of the whole church. Its causes and its magnitude impress us with a sense of the sublime, but it was an *awful* sublimity. From its immediate results, and the national calamity of which it was the forerunner, we turn away with painful emotions, to contemplate the hopeful signs which *now* brighten the horizon. The sword has given place to the olive branch. The song of the turtle-dove is heard in the land. Fraternal greetings are exchanged between brethren who were thought to be alienated forever. Let us hope that in the near future an Ecumenical Council of all the Methodisms in the country is a possibility.

One of the most remarkable facts in the history of Methodism is the long continuance of its revival elements. Never before in the history of Christianity has a revival of evangelical religion continued so long without reaction or abatement. Certainly we have seen no signs of decay during the past fifty years. Out of all her conflicts the Methodist Episcopal Church has come forth without a broken lance or an indented shield, and is to-day an army with banners. The roll of her membership in all the Conferences for 1877 is 1,671,608. Traveling preachers, 11,269. Local preachers, 13,000. The valuation of property in churches is given at \$70,230,441. The Sunday-school department reports 19,808 schools, 1,493,708 scholars, with a working force of 216,902 officers and teachers. The entire Methodism of the United States, including both Episcopal and non-Episcopal, represents a grand total of 3,314,312.

This tidal wave of religious influence has spread from the cold regions of the North to the everglades of Florida; has swept from the Atlantic over the Alleghanies, rolled its waves against the Rocky Mountains, gone surging through the canons of Colorado, has risen above the Sierras, and plunged down the coast ranges until it has reached the waters of the Pacific. What can stay these mighty waters? Can infidelity in all its materialistic forms? Or the restored blasphemy of Paine, without his common sense? No. As well might the feeble hand of infancy stay the mighty waves of the Atlantic as they come thundering to the shore.

In closing these observations, I cannot refrain from making mention of the brethren who fifty years ago were with me admitted on trial in the Ohio Conference. There were fifteen of us, four of whom are still effective, J. M. Trimble, Wm. Herr, Jos. J. Hill, and myself. Two are now, and have been for some years, superannuated, L. B. Gurley and Alvan Billings. All the others rest from their earthly labors and their works do follow them.

In looking over the minutes of the Detroit Conference for 1877 I find a list entitled, "Our Promoted Fellow-Workers." It is a list of the deceased members since 1856. In reading over their names I found the names of many of those who had been fellow-laborers with me in the Northwest, such men as J. V. Watson, W. H. Collins, Geo. Smith, and Jno. A. Baughman. One name especially affected me deeply, R. R. Richards, who had been an intimate friend and a constant correspondent for many years, but for a long time he had ceased to write. I knew not the cause of his silence until I saw his name among the "promoted fellow-workers." My old companions, they have passed away, like music tones, in a fadeless clime to dwell.

The history of our beloved church is deeply inspiring. The fathers and brethren who have departed look down upon us from the pyramids built by their labor. They stretch out their hands, beckoning us to come up to the imperishable heights on which they stand. Life is short, but an immortal work may be done during its stay. Let us then, dear brethren, "work while it is day, for the night cometh wherein no man can work."

And now, unto him "that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."